UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General, continuing official visit to Armenia, meets with Prime Minister and Chairman of Supreme Council; discusses United Nations assistance for economic reform.

+ United Nations is only forum in which peoples and States can address global problems of fragmentation, anarchy and breakdown of social values, Secretary-General tells Armenian Supreme Council.

+ General Assembly begins consideration of situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina; debates draft resolution by which it would encourage Security Council to lift arms embargo against Bosnian Government.

+ Sixty-eight countries announce contributions totaling $1.15 billion at 1994 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities.

+ General Assembly President, welcoming initialling of Lusaka peace agreement, calls on Angolan Government and UNITA to establish immediate cease-fire.

+ Bosnian Government forces make significant gains on three fronts with coordinated offensives against Bosnian Serbs; intense fighting reported in central Bosnia and Herzegovina.

+ Preparatory Committee for Fiftieth Anniversary of United Nations approves annual report to General Assembly; Observer for Palestine to be invited to participate in Assembly's special session next October.

+ Economic and Financial Committee concludes consideration of Economic and Social Council report; Secretary-General of Habitat II, noting global urbanization, says key to human security will be found in cities.

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For information media—not an official record

Continuing his official visit to Armenia, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today addressed the country's Supreme Council. He also met with the Chairman of the Council, Babken Ararktsian, and discussed the forthcoming observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. Noting that there would be parliamentary elections in Armenia next year, the Chairman expressed interest in the different forms of electoral assistance provided by the United Nations. The Secretary-General said the Organization was at the disposal of its Member States in such matters.

The Secretary-General had a one-hour meeting with Prime Minister Hrant Bagratian. The Prime Minister expressed gratitude for United Nations assistance with regard to economic reform, particularly for projects developed by the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The Secretary-General reaffirmed the Organization's willingness to reinforce cooperation with Armenia. They also discussed the settlement of conflict within Caucasia, particularly the situation in Nagorny-Karabakh.

Also today, the Secretary-General was awarded an honorary doctorate by Yerevan State University. He visited the town of Echmiadzin, and called on Archbishop Pozapalian I, the temporary head of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Tomorrow, he will pay an official visit to Moldova, and will depart for Geneva at the end of the day.

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In his address to the Supreme Council of Armenia, the Secretary-General said the country must achieve self-reliant, sustainable development, having recovered its political independence. The transition to a market economy was long and hard, but Armenia's progress in economic reforms, particularly in the privatization of land and enterprises, was a model for the region. The United Nations would continue to support Armenia in such a difficult period.

The Organization was also at a turning point in its history, he continued. In the wake of the cold war, it was being asked to keep peace where there was no peace to keep, to intervene where there was no government, and to maintain troops where not all parties approved of their presence. It also had to supply humanitarian aid, care for refugees, and help rebuild infrastructures. For the United Nations to be successful, Member States must be ready to pay their financial dues in full, to send troops and equipment, and to stay the course of peace-keeping missions which might last for years.

The United Nations was also dedicated to tackling the problems of development, which lay at the root of political problems, he said. It was working for a more prosperous world, where human rights were respected, where democratic rule was the norm and where poverty, unemployment and social exclusion were banished from societies. In a world faced with fragmentation and divisions, the United Nations was the only possible forum for peoples and States. In a world faced with anarchy, it offered the possibility of international order. In a world faced with the breakdown of social values, it offered support for sustainable development, he concluded.

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The General Assembly met today to begin consideration of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Assembly had before it a draft resolution by which it would urge the Security Council, in fulfilling its responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security, to take all appropriate steps to uphold and restore fully the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and unity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

By the draft, the Assembly would encourage the Security Council to give all due consideration and exempt the Governments of the Republic and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the arms embargo originally imposed by resolution 713 (1991). In line with the offer made by the Bosnian Government, the Assembly would encourage the Council to consider a de jure lifting of the embargo, with effective application deferred for up to six months or more.

Introducing the resolution, the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina said that if his Government had to choose between a continued role for the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and a lifting of the arms embargo, it would end the embargo.

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Sixty-eight countries announced contributions of almost $1.15 billion at the 1994 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities, which ended yesterday. A total of $980 million was pledged for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), including estimates, and more than $30 million for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), excluding estimates. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) received pledges worth $118 million.

The Administrator of the UNDP, James Gustave Speth, said the funds pledged supported programmes to help developing countries make sustainable progress in improving the lives of their citizens. Unfortunately, that progress had been jeopardized by a decline in contributions in recent years. UNICEF's Executive Director, James P. Grant, said the pledges made by small countries and non-traditional donors reflected an understanding that many small contributions could have a considerable impact when taken together. The Executive Director of the UNFPA, Nafis Sadik, said the Conference was an important part of efforts to mobilize resources for population activities. The challenge now was to translate agreements reached at the International Conference on Population and Development into action.

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General Assembly President Amara Essy (Côte d'Ivoire) has called on the Government of Angola and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) to establish an immediate cease-fire. Welcoming the initialling of a peace agreement in Lusaka, he urged the parties to do everything possible to bring about a formal signing without delay.

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The President congratulated the Angolan Government and UNITA for their courage and sense of responsibility, and called on them to cultivate reconciliation and tolerance in order to facilitate a lasting peace. That would enable Angola to concentrate its efforts and resources on reconstruction and development and on promoting the well-being of the Angolan people. He also expressed gratitude to Special Representative Alioune Blondin Beye and the observers of Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States for their decisive contribution to the Angolan peace process.

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Bosnian Government forces have made militarily significant gains with coordinated offensives on three fronts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a United Nations spokesman said today. The offensives were underway south of the Bihac pocket, in central Bosnia, and near Mount Igman.

The most intense fighting was taking place around the town of Kupres in central Bosnia, the spokesman said. Bosnian Croat forces appeared to be actively engaging the Bosnian Serbs there, and over 3,000 detonations were reported in the last 24 hours.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) noted two violations of Security Council-designated exclusions zones by Bosnian Serb forces. A 76mm gun was fired in violation of the zone around Gorazde, while three mortar rounds were fired in Sarajevo.

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The Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations yesterday approved its annual report to the General Assembly. In taking that action, the Committee decided to invite the Observer for Palestine, in addition to all Member and observer States, to participate in the Assembly's special session next October.

According to the report, 79 States have set up national committees to coordinate activities for the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary, while 29 intend to do so. The Committee will hold its next meeting on 17 November, and its last meeting for the year on 1 December.

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The key to real global security -- human security -- will be found in future in cities, according to the Secretary-General of the 1996 United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Wally N'Dow. He said that growing social tensions, which were rooted in poverty and the maldistribution of resources, would have to be resolved in cities. He made those comments to the Second Committee (Economic and Financial) yesterday, as it concluded its consideration of the report of the Economic and Social Council.

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By the end of the century, more than half of the world's people would be city dwellers, with most urban population growth coming in developing countries, he continued. By the year 2020, 85 per cent of the people in Latin America and the Caribbean region would live in cities, as would 54 per cent in Africa and 56 per cent in Asia.

Also yesterday, Algeria, on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China, introduced a draft resolution on the implementation of the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation and International Development Strategy. That draft would request the Secretary-General to ensure that his agenda for development provided an impetus to that process.

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